

Four Books, Two Regions

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Image of Acadia, Photographs by Roméo Cormier. Introduction by Léon Thériault. Oxford University Press, 1980. Unpaginated. \$14.95 cloth. ISBN 0-19-540330-4.

Nova Scotia: The Lighthouse Route and the Annapolis Valley, Photographs by Sherman Hines. Oxford University Press, 1980. Unpaginated. \$12.95 cloth. ISBN 0-19-540319-3.

The Bruce Trail Country: Niagara to Tobermory, Photographs by Peter Fowler. Introduction by Martin Keen. Oxford University Press, 1980. Unpaginated. \$12.95 cloth. ISBN 0-19-54034-2.

Cottage Country, Photographs by Peter Fowler. Introduction by Gordon Sinclair. Oxford University Press, 1980. Unpaginated. \$12.95 cloth. ISBN 0-19-540334-4.

Here are four beautiful books which are of value not only as coffee-table items to Canadians interested in their own country, but also to teachers and students who recognize the importance of discovering the diversity so characteristic of our nation. This diversity may be appreciated through the study of written works, but surely it will be better apprehended if presented visually as well.

In *Image of Acadia*, Roméo Cormier presents a romantic view of Acadians and their attachment to the land. Traditional lifestyles (farming, fishing) are still widely followed in this region and are beautifully captured in the book. Léon Thériault, a professor of Acadian history, introduces the photographs with a brief account of the Acadians, past and present.

This book will hold particular interest to people of the region itself. Cormier's aim was to meet the need of Acadians "to form a clear perception of their homeland." He has travelled throughout the region and has captured the diversity and dynamism of Acadian life. Colour photos, well-reproduced, present a seasonal portrait of the villages, people, landscapes and seascapes of the Acadian region. It must be admitted that the portrait contains no representation of the seamy side: no record of poverty, decay, or abandonment. Nevertheless the quality of the photographs and the deep attachment revealed in the photos make this work of value to students, teachers and other interested individuals of other provinces and regions of

Canada as well as to Acadians themselves.

A map included at the beginning of the book enables readers to pinpoint the location of each of the 86 photos, and thus to get a perspective on the region as a whole. A second point concerning format applies to both Maritimes texts reviewed here – the means of plate identification could be improved. In both cases the photographs are all listed before the photos themselves appear. This method of presentation is less cohesive than identification of each photo as it appears.

Nova Scotia the Lighthouse Route and the Annapolis Valley is a compilation of beautifully reproduced photographs which celebrate the unique and lovely character of Nova Scotia. Wooden fishing villages, lighthouses, beaches, the pastoral beauty of the valley, its orchards and farms, as well as historic monuments and glimpses of the diverse animal and plant life through the four seasons are all combined in this text. The introduction, describing the region through a brief outline of a journey taken around the South Shore and along the Lighthouse Route to the Annapolis Valley, is by Sherman Hines, a well known Canadian photographer, and native of Nova Scotia. Hines has published two other successful books, *Outhouses of the East* and *Atlantic Canada*. In his new book, Hines includes some historic background while detailing the moods and facets of modern Nova Scotia.

A few portraits are included to add a more human element; Hines states that it is the warmth and friendliness of the inhabitants which give such charm to the region. The photographs are grouped by season which somewhat lessens the geographic nature of the portrait. Since the photos are presented as the result of a journey along the Lighthouse Route to the Valley, they might better have been ordered geographically, following the trail. A map (like the one in *Images of Acadia*) would also have been a valuable tool to students and to general interest readers.

As a new resident of Nova Scotia, I found both of these Atlantic texts of great interest. Not only do they contain beautiful examples of two fine photographers' works, but they proved to be a good means by which to get acquainted with a geographic region very different from the one I had grown up in. And, after showing the books to true "Maritimers," I found that they are also interesting and useful to anyone already familiar with this landscape. As a displaced Ontarian, I also appreciated the other two books under review here, as they highlighted well-remembered scenes of my home province. As a geographer, I found all four texts interesting studies of very different regions.

The photographs assembled in *The Bruce Trail Country, Niagara to Tobermory* are not intended as a definitive representation of the over 400 miles of caves, brush, forest, towns, and countryside traversed by the Bruce Trail as it follows the Niagara Escarpment in Ontario. They give a hint of some of the scenes that may be viewed along the trail; they are an invitation to further (physical) exploration by the reader.

Each photograph is identified when it appears, and may then be pinpointed on the included map. The photos are ordered by season, treatment which still offends my geographic nature. I would rather be shown physical differences within the system in sequential locations, rather than in weather variations.

As Martin Keen puts it in the introduction to the work, a complete description of the Trail in a foreword is impossible – because the Trail means so many things to so many people. The very diversified nature of the Trail is well highlighted in these selected views photographed by commercial artist Peter Fowler. As well as photos of specific plant and animal life, there are shots of many human activities: fishing, skiing, hunting, fairs and regattas, and a panorama of places: conservation areas, farmland, orchards, historic sites, and the divers' paradise at the tip of the Bruce Peninsula.

Peace, relaxation and memories of pleasant summers are all evoked by the photographs, also taken by Peter Fowler, compiled in *Cottage Country*. This work is introduced by Gordon Sinclair. His attachment to the land, the cottage country north of Barrie, Ontario, where old and young may peacefully interact, where urban problems and pressures are left far behind, is obvious: and it is reinforced by the beautiful photographs typifying the various elements of this region. Fowler captures scenes where man's presence has been felt – the cottages, regattas, sleighrides, campgrounds – and also shows areas which seem never to have been intruded upon. Landscapes are presented at dawn and at dusk, in winter, spring, summer and fall. No map is included, but one does not seem as necessary to this work as to the others reviewed.

All four books will interest Canadians fascinated by this country's geographical diversity: all are texts which could be valuable tools in a teaching environment. University of Oxford Press has published other photographic essays in the same series, and, hopefully, will be publishing still more, to depict our northern and western environs as well.

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